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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW, GARRETT & DUNNER LLP 901 NEW YORK AVENUE, NW WASHINGTON, DC 20001-4413			EXAMINER JOO, JOSHUA	
			ART UNIT 2154	PAPER NUMBER
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/083,151

Applicant(s)

TOYOTA ET AL.

Examiner

Joshua Joo

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
 - If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
 - Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 October 2007.
- 2a) ☒ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4, 6-12 and 14-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4, 6-12 and 14-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 27 February 2002 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 10/29/07.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date: _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

Detailed Action

1. This Office action is in response to the communication dated 10/29/2007.
2. Claims 1-4, 6-12, 14-20 are presented for examination.

Examiner's Note

3. On October 26, 2007, Applicant, Anthony Lombardi, Reg. No. 53,232, and Examiner agreed on an examiner's amendment for the issue of a Notice of Allowability. On October 29, 2007, an information disclosure statement (IDS) listing foreign patent document JP 2000-187631, Katsuya, S. and a copy of the foreign patent document in Japanese with an English abstract was submitted for the instant application. Based on the IDS (JP 2000-187631) and a translation of the Japanese patent document, JP 2000-187631, the Notice of Allowability is not issued, and the claims from the amendment dated August 03, 2007 are rejected in this Office action.

Information Disclosure Statement

4. The information disclosure statement (IDS) submitted 10/29/2007 is in compliance with the provisions of 37 CFR 1.97. Accordingly, the information disclosure statement is being considered by the examiner.

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-4, 6-12, 14-20 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection. New ground(s) of rejection are necessitated by Applicant's amendment.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

6. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-4, 6-12, 14-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

- i) Regarding claim 1, the terms "a second virtual community" in the step "wherein one of the plurality of client terminals displays a window comprising a list of the first virtual community and a second community" is not clear since "a second virtual community" is also recited in the preamble of the claim. Is the "a second virtual community" same as the "a second virtual community" in the preamble?

The terms "a second virtual community" is also unclear for claims 2, 6, 7, 9, 10, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, and 20 for reasons similar to claim 1.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. Claims 1, 4, 9, 12, and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over a translation of Applicant's submitted IDS, Katsuya Sakamaki, JP 2000-187631 (Katsuya hereinafter), in view of Bunney et al. US Publication #2002/0059244 (Bunney hereinafter) .

9. As per claims 1, 9, and 17, Katsuya teaches substantially the invention as claimed including a community-based collaborative knowledge system which can be connected to a plurality of client terminals via a network, and which supports knowledge accumulation by categorizing and accumulating messages posted from each client terminal to a plurality of virtual communities, the plurality of virtual

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communities comprising at least a first virtual community and a second virtual community, the system comprising:

access control means for making user authentication of a client terminal as an access request source so as to permit the client terminal to post a message (Paragraphs 0045-0047. Authentication data, i.e. user id and password. Paragraph 0081. User posts content.); and

community processing means for managing the plurality of virtual communities (Paragraphs 0030-0031, 0033. Forum participation and management tables, i.e. forums and participants) and for categorizing and accumulating messages into a plurality of topics (fig. 22; paragraphs 0033; 0071. Comments are posted for specific forum names.), the messages being posted to the plurality of virtual communities from the client terminals (Page 23, paragraph 0083. Posted comment.), the client terminals being granted access permission for specified topics by said access control means (fig. 22; page 24, paragraphs 0088-0089. Post/read messages for selected forum. Paragraph 0072. Registration for membership of forum.), said community processing means including:

message subscription type setting means for setting a first subscription type for the first virtual community, the first subscription type indicating the way a user subscribes to the categorized and accumulated messages in accordance with an instruction from the user (Paragraphs 0074-0075. Releasing format of "mail format" or "web format").,

wherein one of the plurality of client terminals displays a window comprising a list of the first virtual community and a second virtual community (Paragraphs 00071-0072. Display forum list.), and

wherein the "system maintains" the first subscription type is browsing by a web browser for the first virtual community, and indicates a second subscription type is using an email client for the second virtual community (fig. 8; Paragraphs 0031-0032. Registered user. Forums and corresponding release formats, either e-mail or web.).

10. Katsuya does not specifically teach of a client terminal displaying the first and second subscription type.

Bunney teaches of a system for registering to an online service for accessing forums, wherein a registered user may view and modify the user's profile/settings (Paragraph 0061-0063).

11. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Katsuya and Bunney to display a user's profile/settings as taught by Bunney such that a user's subscription types as taught by Sakamaki are displayed to the user. The motivation for the suggested combination is that Bunney's teachings would allow a user to view and edit the user's preferences for online service.

12. As per claims 4 and 12, Katsuya teaches a system according to claim 1, wherein said message subscription type setting means set a subscription type of each user for each individual virtual community (fig. 21; paragraph 0074-0075. Registration of forum comprises selecting a subscription type.).

13. Claims 2-3, 10-11, and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katsuya, in view of Guheen, US Patent #6,519,571 (Guheen hereinafter).

14. As per claims 2, 10, and 18, Katsuya teaches substantially the invention as claimed including a community-based collaborative knowledge system which can be connected to a plurality of client terminals via a network, and which supports knowledge accumulation by categorizing and accumulating messages posted from each client terminal to a plurality of virtual communities, the plurality of virtual communities comprising at least a first virtual community and a second virtual community, the system comprising:

access control means for making user authentication of a client terminal as an access request source so as to permit the client terminal to post a message (Paragraphs 0045-0047. Authentication data, i.e. user id and password. Paragraph 0081. User posts content.); and

community processing means for managing the plurality of virtual communities (Paragraphs 0030-0031, 0033. Forum participation and management tables, i.e. forums and participants), and for categorizing and accumulating messages into a plurality of topics (fig. 22; paragraphs 0033; 0071. Comments are posted for forum names.), the messages being posted to the plurality of virtual communities from the client terminals, the client terminals being granted access permission for specified topics by said access control means (fig. 22; page 24, paragraphs 0088-0089. Post/read messages for selected forum. Paragraphs 0072; 0098. Registration for membership of forum.), said community processing means including:

message subscription type setting means for setting a first subscription type for the first virtual community, the first subscription type indicating the way a user subscribes to the categorized and accumulated messages (Paragraphs 0074-0076. Set releasing format as "mail format" or "web format")., and

display means for displaying a window comprising a list of the first virtual community and the second virtual community (Paragraphs 00071-0072. Display forum list.),

wherein the "system maintaining" the first subscription type is browsing by a web browser for the first virtual community, and indicates a second subscription type is using an email client for the second virtual community (fig. 8; Paragraphs 0031-0032. Registered user. Forums and corresponding release formats, either e-mail or web.).

15. Katsuya does not specifically of setting the first subscription type in accordance with an instruction from a predetermined administrator and the displayed window indicating the first subscription type and second subscription type.

Guheen teaches a system for management of user profiles, wherein an administrator may moderate user membership in forums and an user or administrator may modify user profiles/preferences (col. 207, lines 40-61; col. 210, lines 31-45; col. 261, lines 41-48).

16. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Katsuya and Guheen for an administrator to modify user profile/preference and manage user membership of forums as taught by Guheen such that the subscription type as taught by Katsuya is set by the administrator. It would have been also obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art combine the teachings for an administrator to view user profile/preference such that the first subscription type and second subscription as taught by Katsuya are viewed by the administrator or a user. The motivation for the suggested combination is that Guheen's teachings would allow moderation of access to forums and allow an administrator or user to manage user information.

17. As per claims 3 and 11, Katsuya does not specifically teach a system according to claim 2, wherein the administrator is determined for each individual virtual community.

Guheen teaches a system for management of user profiles, wherein an administrator moderates (is determined) for forums (col. 207, lines 40-61; col. 210, lines 31-45; col. 261, lines 41-48).

18. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Katsuya and Guheen to determine an administrator for forums. The motivation for the suggested combination is that Guheen's teachings would allow a user to regulate and manage forums.

19. Claims 6, 8, 14, 16, and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katsuya, in view of Smith, US Patent #6,594,673 (Smith hereinafter) and Bunney.

20. As per claims 6, 14, and 19, Katsuya teaches substantially the invention as claimed including a community-based collaborative knowledge system which can be connected to a plurality of client terminals via a network, and supports knowledge accumulation by categorizing and accumulating messages posted from each client terminal to a plurality of virtual communities, the plurality of virtual communities comprising at least a first virtual community and a second virtual community, the system comprising:

access control means for making user authentication of a client terminal as an access request source so as to permit the client terminal to post a message (Paragraphs 0045-0047. Authentication data, i.e. user id and password. Paragraph 0081. User posts content.);

message subscription type setting means for setting a first subscription type for the first virtual community, the first subscription type indicating the way a user subscribes to the categorized and accumulated messages in accordance with an instruction from the user (Paragraphs 0074-0076. Set releasing format as "mail format" or "web format"); and

community processing means for managing the plurality of virtual communities (Paragraphs 0030-0031, 0033. Forum participation and management tables, i.e. forums and participants), and categorizing and accumulating messages posted, to the plurality of virtual communities, from the client terminals, the client terminals being granted access permission for specified topics by said access control means (fig. 22; page 24, paragraphs 0088-0089. Post/read messages for selected forum. Paragraphs 0072; 0098. Registration for membership of forum.), said community processing means including:

reply message processing means for, when a reply email message used to post a reply message is sent back from the client terminal in response to an email message used to deliver the categorized and accumulated message to a subscriber (Paragraphs 0089; 0099-0101. Reply to posted comment.), automatically determining a virtual community to which the reply message should belong, and

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categorizing and accumulating the reply message (Paragraph 0101. Associate reply to original contents.

Paragraph 0098. Contents under forum title.),

wherein one of the plurality of client terminals displays a window comprising a list of the first virtual community and a second virtual community (Paragraphs 00071-0072. Display forum list.), and

wherein the "system maintaining" the first subscription type is browsing by a web browser for the first virtual community, and indicates a second subscription type is using an email client for the second virtual community (fig. 8; Paragraphs 0031-0032. Registered user. Forums and corresponding release formats, either e-mail or web.).

21. Katsuya teaches of automatically determining a virtual community to which the reply message should belong but not specifically by analyzing a message header of the reply email message. Katsuya also does not specifically teach of the displayed window indicating the first subscription type and the second subscription type.

Smith teaches a system for collaborative information, wherein headers of postings are analyzed for routing and categorization (col. 7, lines 34-46).

22. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Katsuya and Smith to analyze a message header for routing and categorization of postings as taught by Smith when determining a virtual community to which the reply message should belong as taught by Katsuya. The motivation for the suggested combination is that Smith's teachings would provide designated fields for categorizing messages and provide information descriptive of the postings.

23. Katsuya and Smith still do not specifically teach of the displayed window indicating the first subscription type and the second subscription type.

Bunney teaches of a system for registering to an online service for accessing forums, wherein a registered user may view and modify the user's profile/settings (Paragraph 0061-0063).

24. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine suggested system of Katsuya and Smith with the teachings of Bunney to display a user's profile/settings as taught by Bunney such that a user's subscription types as taught by Sakamaki are displayed to the user. The motivation for the suggested combination is that Bunney's teachings would allow a user to view and edit preferences for the online service.

25. As per claims 8 and 16, Katsuya teaches a system according to claim 6, wherein said reply message processing means further automatically determines a topic to which the reply message should belong (Paragraphs 0089; 0099-0101. Reply to posted comment. Paragraph 0101. Associate reply to original contents. Paragraph 0098. Contents under forum title.).

26. Claims 7, 15, and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katsuya, in view of Knight et al. US Patent #6,571,234 (Knight hereinafter) and Bunney.

27. As per claim 7, 15, 20, Katsuya teaches substantially the invention as claimed including a community-based collaborative knowledge system which can be connected to a plurality of client terminals via a network, and supports knowledge accumulation by categorizing and accumulating messages posted from each client terminal to a plurality of virtual communities, the plurality of virtual communities comprising at least a first virtual community and a second virtual community, the system comprising:

access control means for making user authentication of a client terminal as an access request source so as to permit the client terminal to post a message (Paragraphs 0045-0047. Authentication data, i.e. user id and password. Paragraph 0081. User posts content.);

message subscription type setting means for setting a first subscription type for the first virtual community, the first subscription type indicating the way a user subscribes to the categorized and accumulated messages in accordance with an instruction from the user (Paragraphs 0074-0076. Set releasing format as "mail format" or "web format".); and

community processing means for managing the plurality of virtual communities (Paragraphs 0030-0031, 0033. Forum participation and management tables, i.e. forums and participants), and categorizing and accumulating messages posted, to the plurality of virtual communities, from the client terminals, the client terminals being granted access permission for specified topics by said access control means (fig. 22; paragraphs 0088-0089. Post/read messages for selected forum. Paragraphs 0072; 0098. Registration for membership of forum.), said community processing means including:

reply message processing means for, when a reply email message used to post a reply message is sent back from the client terminal in response to an email message used to deliver the categorized and accumulated message to a subscriber (0089; 0099-0101. Reply to posted comment.), automatically determining a virtual community to which the reply message should belong, and categorizing and accumulating the reply message (Paragraph 0101. Associate reply to original contents. Paragraph 0098. Contents under forum title.),

wherein one of the plurality of client terminals displays a window comprising a list of the first virtual community and a second virtual community (Paragraphs 00071-0072. Display forum list.), and

wherein the system "maintains" the first subscription type is browsing by a web browser for the first virtual community, and indicates a second subscription type is using an email client for the second

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virtual community (fig. 8; Paragraphs 0031-0032. Registered user. Forums and corresponding release formats, either e-mail or web.).

28. Katsuya teaches of automatically determining a virtual community to which the reply message should belong but not specifically by analyzing a subject of the reply email message. Katsuya also does not specifically teach of the displayed window indicating the first subscription type and the second subscription type.

Knight teaches a system of subscribing to a message board, wherein postings are classified by analyzing the subject matter of the posting (col. 12, lines 6-27).

29. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Katsuya and Smith to analyze the subject matter of a posting as taught by Knight when determining a virtual community to which the reply message should belong as taught by Katsuya. The motivation for the suggested combination is that Knight's teachings would provide an explicit method of determining where the posting should be classified and placed.

30. Katsuya and Knight still do not specifically teach of the displayed window indicating the first subscription type and the second subscription type.

Bunney teaches of a system for registering to an online service for accessing forums, wherein a registered user may view and modify the user's profile/settings (Paragraph 0061-0063).

31. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine suggested system of Katsuya and Knight with the teachings of Bunney to display a user's profile/settings as taught by Bunney such that a user's subscription types as taught by Sakamaki are displayed to the user. The motivation for the suggested combination is that Bunney's teachings would allow a user to view and edit preferences for the online service.

Conclusion

32. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

33. A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

34. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Joshua Joo whose telephone number is 571 272-3966. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Friday 7 to 4.

35. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Nathan J. Flynn can be reached on 571 272-1915. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

36. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair->

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direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

December 1, 2007

JJ


NATHAN FLYNN
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER